study of aging Mormons within a family context is the *LDS Family Longitudinal Study*, sponsored by Brigham Young University. This projected twenty-year study was initiated in 1983 with approximately 1,200 individuals from 133 three-generation families. It suggests that most older Church members are doing rather well; however, individual conditions and challenges vary considerably.

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**EVAN T. PETERSON**

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**SERMON ON THE MOUNT**

The Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5–7) is for Latter-day Saints, as well as for all other Christians, a key source for the teachings of Jesus and of Christian behavior ethics. The fact that parallel accounts appear in the *Book of Mormon* (3 Ne. 12–14) and the *Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible* (JST Matt. 5–7) offers both the opportunity for a better understanding of the Sermon and the obligation to refute notions of mere plagiarism by the Prophet Joseph Smith. A careful comparison of the texts reveals significant differences that are attributable primarily to the specific setting of the Book of Mormon sermon.

In the Book of Mormon account, the resurrected Jesus appeared to the more righteous survivors of a fierce storm and major earthquake in the Western Hemisphere who had gathered at the temple in the land called Bountiful. The setting includes the performance of ordinances, for the people prepared for baptism, first that of water by twelve men whom Jesus had ordained, followed by that of fire from the Lord himself (3 Ne. 12:1). The sermon at the temple thus provides the assembled multitude with an understanding of their duties and obligations. It also introduces them to the fulness of the gospel that Jesus established among them because he had fulfilled the law “that was given unto Moses” (3 Ne. 15:4–10) under which they had lived. Obedience to Jesus’ gospel gave the Book of Mormon people two hundred years of peace and harmony as it became established throughout their lands (4 Ne. 1:17–23). Since Jesus himself observes that he had given a similar sermon in Palestine before he ascended to his Father (3 Ne. 15:1), Latter-day Saints have no doubt that the Sermon on the Mount reflects a unified presentation that the Savior possibly gave on several occasions (JST Matt. 7:1–2, 9, 11) and not merely a collection brought together by Matthew or his sources. As in many speaking situations, a speaker can repeat the basic message with appropriate alterations to fit the specific audience.

**SETTING OF THE SERMONS.** While much of the text in 3 Nephi 12–14 is identical to Matthew 5–7, there are numerous and significant differences. Most of the differences stem from the specific setting of the Book of Mormon sermon. First, the risen Jesus opened his Book of Mormon sermon with three additional beatitudes that underscore its purpose as an address to believers: “Blessed are ye if ye shall give heed unto the words of these twelve whom I have chosen; . . . blessed are ye if ye shall believe in me and be baptized; . . . more blessed are they who shall believe in your words . . . and be baptized . . . [and] receive a remission of their sins” (3 Ne. 12:1–2). Further, the Book of Mormon account is post-Resurrection, and the emphasis is on the fact that the Lord has completely fulfilled his mission of salvation. Thus, Jesus can summarize the series of antitheses recorded in 3 Nephi 12:21–45: “Those things which were of old time, which were under the law, in me are all fulfilled” (3 Ne. 12:46). Furthermore, rather than instructing the people “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matt. 5:48), Jesus in meaningfully modified words told them, “I would that ye should be perfect even as I, or your Father who is in heaven is perfect” (3 Ne. 12:48). In place of the open-ended “one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all be fulfilled” (Matt. 5:18), the Book of Mormon passage replaced the phrase “till all be fulfilled” with “but in me it hath all been fulfilled” (3 Ne. 12:18).

Other changes reflect both the Book of Mormon setting and the absence of antiphrasical statements that figure prominently in Matthew’s account. Two examples of the former are the replacement of the “farthing” (Matt. 5:26) with the
“semine” (3 Ne. 12:26), which was the smallest Nephite measure of gold (Alma 11:3, 15–19), and the lack of reference to the swearing “by Jerusalem . . . the city of the great King” (Matt. 5:35). Similarly, the sermon at the temple in Bountiful does not mention surpassing the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, as in Matthew 5:20, or that of the publicans who are loved by their friends (Matt. 5:46–47). In place of the references to the scribes and Pharisees (Matt. 5:20), the Lord told the Nephites: “Except ye shall keep my commandments, which I have commanded you at this time, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven” (3 Ne. 12:20). Also, the Book of Mormon account does not contain the references to self-mutilation found in Matthew 5:29–30, or the qualifying phrase “without a cause” in Matthew 5:22 (cf. 3 Ne. 12:22).

Clarifications. A further type of difference consists of additions to the Sermon on the Mount text that often provide sensible clarifications. Several examples are found in the Beatitudes. The Book of Mormon version noted that it is “the poor in spirit who come unto me” who inherit the kingdom of heaven (3 Ne. 12:3; Matt. 5:3; emphasis added). At the end of 3 Nephi 12:6 (cf. Matt. 5:6), one finds “blessed are all they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled with the Holy Ghost” (emphasis added). While these might seem to be small changes, they nonetheless enhance understanding of Jesus’ meaning.

For Latter-day Saints, the message of the Sermon on the Mount centers on its normative value. As a covenant-making people, they take upon themselves the obligation to emulate the Savior in their personal lives and to work toward the ultimate goal of becoming like him. Although the demands are substantial, they are provided an incentive to strive to become like their divine model (cf. 2 Ne. 31:7–10, 16; 3 Ne. 27:27). The simple words and teachings that Jesus gave to his followers in Palestine and to the Book of Mormon survivors are still applicable to his Saints today.

[See also Lord’s Prayer.]

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ROBERT TIMOTHY UPDEGRAFF

SETH
Seth was the son of Adam and Eve, a high priest, a patriarch, and one chosen to fill the birthright promise of the covenant seed. While the Bible devotes only seven verses to Seth (Gen. 4:25–26; 5:3–4, 6–8), Latter-day scripture adds substantial detail, underscoring his importance in a manner reminiscent of other ancient texts. According to LDS sources, Seth was born after numerous other children (Moses 5:2–3), was ordained at age sixty-nine by Adam, and became patriarchal leader after the death of his father (D&C 107:41–42).

Following the murder of Abel, Seth inherited the birthright of the patriarchal order of the high priesthood because of his righteousness (D&C 107:40–43), taking Abel’s place (Gen. 4:25; Moses 6:2). “The order of this priesthood was confirmed to be handed down from father to son, and rightly belongs to the literal descendants of [Seth’s] chosen seed, to whom the promises were made . . . in the days of Adam, and came down by lineage . . . from Adam to Seth, who . . . received the promise of God by his father, that his posterity should be the chosen of the Lord, and that they should be preserved unto the end of the earth” (D&C 107:40–42). At ADAM-ONDI-AHMAN, before his death, Adam bestowed a “blessing upon seven of his [descendants]—Seth, Enos, Jared, Canaan, Mahalaleel, Enoch, and Methuselah” (Durham, p. 64).

Seth was obedient and righteous under the tutelage of Adam so that “he seemed . . . like unto his father in all things,” and was called “a perfect man” (D&C 107:43), as were NOAH and others (Gen. 6:9; Job 1:1). He “offered an acceptable sacrifice, like unto his brother Abel,” with the result that “God revealed himself unto Seth” (Moses 6:3). Apocryphal texts, seeking patterns for the ministry of the expected MESSIAH, focus on notions of Seth’s leadership in the premortal life, his complete obedience, and his role as father and patriarch of the covenant race (Brown, p. 278).